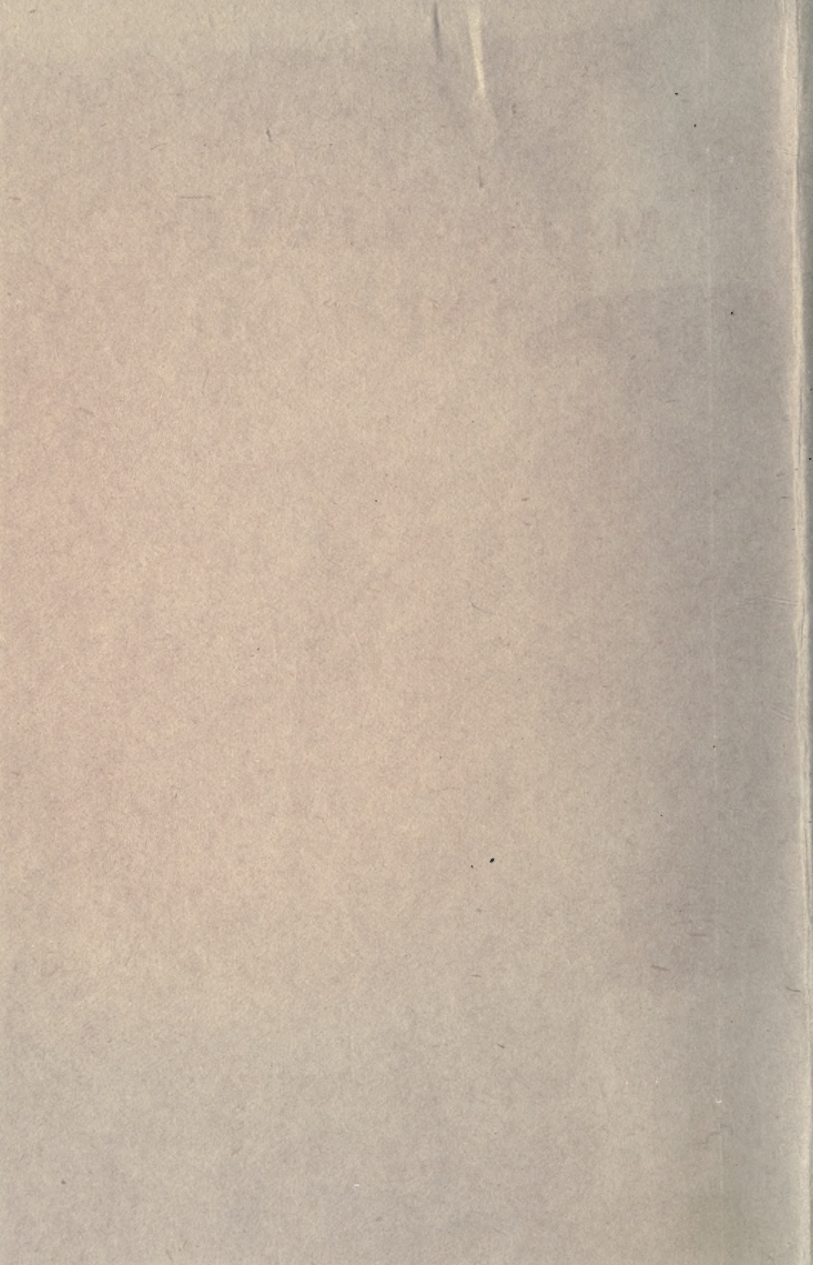




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BY

"THE LITTLE MOTHER."

MAPLE LEAVES
IN ENGLAND



THE LITTLE MOON.



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MRS. BAGSHAW "THE LITTLE MOTHER."

THE
HISTORY OF THE
CITY OF BOSTON
FROM THE FIRST SETTLEMENT
TO THE PRESENT TIME
BY
JOHN H. COLEMAN

WITH
REVERENCE AND GRATITUDE
I DEDICATE THESE MEMORIES TO THE
17TH MANCHESTER PALS BATTALION,
AND TO ALL WHO FOUGHT AND DIED
IN THE GREAT WAR.

FOREWORD.

My reason for writing the episodes contained in this volume is, that I have been asked so many times by the people of Canada, and also by many influential people in England, to write down my experiences with the Canadian soldiers during the years of the War. So far, I have refrained from doing so, but in the evening of my days, I memorize so many things, and the passing of years has not waned my interest in those dear sons of Canada, and whom it was my privilege to "mother" during those four years. Every episode is absolutely true—with this exception, that some of the names are altered. I am fully aware of my shortcomings, but trust the reader will follow these pages with sympathetic tolerance.

M. E. BAGSHAW.

CHAPTER I.

In the spring of 1914 I was sitting at breakfast with my son Herbert, who was deeply interested in the morning paper. He looked up at me and said:

“Mother, we shall have a terrible war with Germany some day!”

“Yes,” I answered, “I am afraid we will, Herbert. I do not think it will be in my day, but I am afraid it will be in yours.”

Little did I dream that the days of war were so near, and that in three short months he himself would be a soldier, for he joined the 17th Manchester Pals in the end of August, 1914.

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In the November following the wounded began to pour into the Man-

chester Hospitals and I was very anxious to do something for them ; I felt I could perhaps write their letters, carry messages, or do anything they were unable to do themselves. I wrote, therefore, to the Matron of our Second Western General Hospital, telling her what I was anxious to do. She replied very kindly, but said she was sorry she could not allow me in the Hospital unless I had a relative, or knew someone who was wounded. She further advised me to join the Red Cross, where I would have the opportunity to do as I wished. Strange as it may seem, by a wonderful coincidence I received a letter from a lady friend in the Isle of Wight the same day asking me to visit her brother, who was badly wounded, in our Second General Hospital. I need hardly say with what joy I received that request. I received the letter at 5.30, and my husband and I were with him at

seven o'clock. Thus were the gates of the hospitals opened to me, and did not close for a period of five years. As I said before, I was with this man at seven o'clock, he belonged to the Hampshire Regiment and his name was George Smith; he had been wounded badly at Armentiers and a large piece of shrapnel was on the locker by the side of his bed which had been taken from his side, and by a strange coincidence his initials were on it—G.S. He was quite bright, although he was only just recovering from the operation. He showed me the piece of shrapnel and his initials and jokingly said it had evidently been meant for him.

I continued to visit him, and through visiting him I got into touch with others, which filled my heart and my dear husband's with joy, feeling that we were, in our small way, alleviating the sufferings of the boys and men who

were doing so much for us.

This same work kept on. I visited the hospital every Thursday, and on Sundays my dear husband accompanied me, bringing home with us any of them who were fit and well enough to come out for a change and a cup of tea. Most of these men were English, Irish, Scotch and Welsh, as I had not then come across any Colonial Soldiers.

In March, 1915, my son, who was in training at Heaton Park came home hurriedly one day telling me that he had been injured inwardly through drilling, and that the Medical Officer had told him he must be discharged or have an operation for hernia. Captain Taylor (who knew me very well) sent him home to me to ask my consent, I left it entirely with the boy, who chose the operation at once, saying he did not want to leave the army while the war was on. He went back to camp, and

I received a postcard the following day telling me he had gone into one of our Military Hospitals. Four more men from his Battalion were admitted at the same time for the same operation, one of whom died under it. Herbert's operation was very successful and when he was discharged from hospital he looked fine, healthy, and strong. Meanwhile, his Regiment had become transferred from Heaton Park to Grantham for further training where he joined them a month afterwards. After Grantham, they went to Salisbury Plain to complete their training, and in the early part of November, 1915, they went to France. My ever dear boy was in France exactly three months to the day when he was killed. I need hardly say that words fail me to frame or express the agony of a mother's or father's heart when this news comes. Suffice to say that the news made us a hundred-fold more anxious to work for the wounded.

CHAPTER II.

I meet my first Canadian.

I received the news of my son's death from the Chaplain on the Thursday, just as I was getting ready to pay my usual visit to the hospital, to take small comforts for the soldiers, but after this news I could not go that day. My other dear son had arrived home to dinner when the news came, and how grateful I have always been that this was so, for he was such a wonderful comfort to me. I was in great agony of mind and I could not sleep. I passed three sleepless nights, and on the third night my boy appeared to me in a vision. He came to my bedside and looked very sad at me, I saw him distinctly, and he

reminded me of a promise I had made him that I would continue to visit the wounded. "You promised you would go to the hospital, mother!" he said. I tried to speak, but he disappeared. Afterwards I had a wonderful sense of comfort and peace steal over me, and the painful gap I had felt in my heart began to heal. I can never forget this wonderful experience. I know that many people thought I had dreamed it, that I was unwittingly asleep, but I know differently, and, as things eventually turned out, I am more convinced of it than ever, for the next day was Sunday and I got ready as usual to visit the hospital with my husband, and that is the day I met my first Canadian boy. (I will here explain that I kept on visiting Roby Street Hospital after my boy had his operation, as I had promised him I would do so).

Well, we went this day into the hos-

pital, where we found everybody from matron to patients full of tender sympathy and memories of my boy. Many fresh patients had been admitted and one young man particularly attracted my attention. I went to his bedside and said, "You look young, how old are you?" "Twenty, madam," he said. "Is your mother living?" I asked. "Yes, and my father," he replied. "Where is your home?" I again asked. "Canada," he said. At this reply I misunderstood him, and thought he had said Cardigan, so I said, "Oh, then you are a Welsh boy."

"A Welsh boy!" he replied. "Do Welsh boys come from Canada?" and at this he opened his mouth widely and laughed.

"Oh," I said, "I thought you said Cardigan, which is in Wales. Well, you are the first Canadian I have met. Have you any friends in England?"

"No," he replied, "you are the first lady I have spoken to, with the exception of the nurse."

At this moment the idea flashed through my mind that I would offer him Herbert's bed, so I said:

"Unfortunately, I have had word that my own dear boy is killed, so I will give you his bed, if you would like to use it." He hardly seemed to understand what I had said at first, so I repeated it. "I will give you my dear son's bed for your leave, if you would like it."

He immediately put his hand out from under the bed clothes and said, "I have just said I had no friends in England. I find I have one."

This little episode began a very firm and long friendship. I treated him as my own son, and he called me Mother, which made me a very happy woman and helped to alleviate my bitter sorrow.

This boy's name was Charles Bristol, and he came from Lloyd Point, British Columbia. I nicknamed him "Shure," because he was always saying "Shure." I can never speak too highly of this boy, for he was truthful, temperate and straight. He spent most of his time at my house, when out from hospital; he would go all messages for me, and even help me with the housework. I found afterwards that most of the Canadians were quite domesticated.

A few months afterwards "Shure" came home to us on leave from Sandling, Kent. He arrived about four o'clock, but walked up and down the street for two or three hours, until he thought we were up, as he would not disturb us. He had a wonderfully happy time with us, for he treated us exactly as if he was our own son. Before his return to Camp, he was very anxious to pay me for his board, but I would not hear of

it and said,

“Don’t do that, Shure, for it will spoil everything. It has been such a joy to both of us to have you.”

“Well,” he said, “will you have my young brother here for his leave?”

“By all means,” I replied. “Give me his address and I will write to him.”

He then asked me if I would save his money for him. I did so, and he kept sending small sums from time to time, which I added to his small account at the bank.

When Shure had returned to camp at Sandling, I wrote his brother in France inviting him to come to me when he had leave. He replied saying how glad he would be to do so—and about three months afterwards he came, landing at my house quite unexpectedly in full kit and fur coat. He was a very fine fellow, only seventeen years of age, stood six foot one in height, and weighed four-

teen stone. He was very good looking too. He was so noticeable that people turned round to look at him when they met him. He came to me for six days, and as the brothers had not seen each other since landing in England, I wrote to Shure's commanding officer asking him if he would allow Shure to come home and have a few days with his young brother. The C.O. was very good, and after making enquiries about me sent Shure home for six days. These two dear boys spent a wonderfully happy time together and this is one of my happiest recollections.

These two boys spent several leaves with me, treating my home exactly as they would their own—sent all their treasures and souvenirs for me to keep for them in safety.

Shure had a keen sense of humour, which I understood so well, and he was ever playing jokes upon me—sometimes

I would receive as many as six comic post cards by the same post—so when he came home on leave, I took him to task about it.

“Don’t keep sending me those silly postcards, laddie,” I said, “but take the Army seriously, as a profession, and try to get a stripe.”

“Me a stripe!” replied Shure. “Not me; I shall never have a stripe.”

“Well, see how proud your mother would be of you,” I said, “and I would be very proud of you, too.”

“Would you? Sure?” he said.

Nothing further was said about this, but a month later he again sent me a postcard, just with these words:—

Dear Mother,—You said get a stripe. I’ve got one. Love.—Shure.

My husband and I quite thought he was playing one of his jokes on me, so we sent the following reply postcard:—

Dear Shure,—Pa wants to know

where you wear your stripe. Love.
—Mother.

Back came another postcard at once:

Dear Mother,—Tell Pa the stripe
is on my arm, not where he thinks
it is. Love.—Shure.

When I realized that he had really got a stripe I wrote at once to congratulate him, but told him that one stripe looked so very lonely by itself, and advised him to get another for company. Another week or two went by, when I got another postcard: "Dear Mother,—You said, Get another stripe for company. Well, I've got a pair now. Love.—Shure." He was not long before he became a sergeant. I can never speak too highly of this boy. He had two or three innocent love affairs, but I was in his full confidence, and he always sought my advice. His fund of humour was contagious, and was like an exhilarating tonic. Even now

I hardly ever hear the name of Canada without my thoughts going back to this boy—my first insight to the open character of the Canadian boy.

During all this time I was in regular correspondence with their mother. Alas! in the March preceding the Armistice, they were both killed. I received a letter one morning from the younger brother telling me that Shure was killed. I wrote immediately a letter of sympathy to him, telling him I felt I had lost a second son, and this letter was returned to me with "Killed in action" written across it. It had not been opened. This news of both boys' deaths was a terrible grief to me, for I looked upon them as my own sons. My next duty was to get in touch with their dear mother at Lloyd Point, B.C., send her my loving sympathy, and tell her how I loved her boys. Then I had to collect all their souvenirs and send

them to her, which I am glad to say she received safely and gratefully. A few months passed by, when I again heard from this mother, asking me if I would "mother" a third son who was coming overseas to fight. She was very depressed and unhappy at the thought of his coming, and ended up her letter thus: "Mrs. Bagshaw, dear, somehow I never used to weep, but I am always weeping now." Fortunately, the Armistice intervened, and the third boy remained in Canada.

CHAPTER III.

In going up and down our streets, I was ever on the look-out for the young Canadian boy. It was the thought of these boys being so far away from home and from the influence of their own mothers which appealed to me. I wanted them to feel there was someone who took a real interest in them for their own good. Many are the varied and interesting tales I could tell about each one—some happy and gay, and others, alas! very grave.

My next experience with a Canadian soldier was not quite so happy as the first. This was a man twenty-four year of age. I had met him in hospital, and invited him to use my son's bed during his convalescent leave. I regret

to say I had a good deal of trouble with him, and he was a continual worry to me, through drink. Apart from the drink he was a fine intelligent man, and I believe he was a clever electrician. During his stay with me he became very friendly with a young person whom I knew slightly, but I knew that her husband was fighting, and it worried me a good deal, so I taxed him about it.

“Cannot you see, Jack,” I said, “how this behaviour hurts me, and how much more it would hurt your own mother if she knew? You must remember that this woman has a husband fighting for her.”

“Well, there is no harm in it, Mother,” he replied; “it is only friendship.”

“Yes, it is only friendship now, perhaps, but these lead to something worse. A large oak tree can come from an acorn, and this friendship of yours

hurts me very much."

"Oh, well, if it's like that, Mother, I will not call on her again," he said.

A day or two after this he went out and was out about two hours; and when he returned I looked at him, and felt convinced that he had been with her again.

"Have you been there again, Jack?" I asked.

He turned and looked me full in the face and said:

"Honestly, Mother, I cannot tell you a lie! God knows I have been with her!"

I walked out of the room with my eyes filled with tears, and he followed me and laid his hand on my shoulder.

"Mother," he said solemnly, "I have told you I have been with her, but I will now make you a solemn promise. I will not go again." I felt I could trust him, for although he was often erratic

through drink, he was on the whole very straight and truthful. Enough to say he kept his promise and did not go near this woman again. I went myself to the woman, and told her that the friendship must cease, and reminded her of her duty to her husband and children. She was quite sensible about it and looked upon it in my light, and we are quite friendly until this day.

When Jack first came to me he asked me to take care of his money for him, which was almost £15. I showed him a private drawer of my own where I put his money, and told him to go to it when he required some. I did not know him sufficiently then—I mean, I did not know he was so fond of drink. He kept coming to me daily for more money until at last I said,

“Now, Jack, you must not have any more before you return to Camp. You must keep some for your return.”

"Do let me have another pound, Mother," he said, "I want to take my pals a bottle of whisky when I go back."

"Very well," I said, "I will buy the bottle of whisky the day you go away."

After a good deal of argument I gave him ten shillings and told him it must last until he went back, and I would give him what was left of his money when he got in the train. Needless to say, I had him sober for the rest of his leave.

On the morning of his departure I said to him,

"Well, Jack, you have been a good deal of trouble to me, so I shall not ask you here again."

"No, Mother," he said, "I know you won't, so I shall come next time without being asked."

I looked at him dumbfounded, and he again repeated that he intended coming again on his next leave to let me see

how good he could be. I accompanied him to the station, and as I wished him "good-bye" I put the three pounds I had left of his money into his hand, and also delivered the parcel containing the bottle of whisky for his "pals."

A few days afterwards I received a very penitent letter from him, asking me to forgive all the misdeeds of his first leave, and for permission to come again. I forgave him, and he not only came once again, but came many times and quite retrieved his character. He was very lovable and straight. He did not go out to France again, and eventually was sent to Scotland, to Inverness, to work in the lumber camp in a Foresters' Battalion. There he met a very nice young lady and married her, and who returned with him to Canada. I regret to say that he met his death four years afterwards in a tragic manner. As I said before, he

was an electrician, and one morning, after kissing his wife and two children before going to his business, he was brought home half an hour afterwards accidentally electrocuted. I believe his wife is still in Canada. I also had two more of his brothers, who came to me from France. They both returned to Canada without being wounded. The one was an extremely nice man, but I had a little trouble with the other, and as it is rather to his discredit I will say no more about him.

CHAPTER IV.

I would like to say I never used lock and key from the Canadians. Every drawer in the house and every cupboard was open to them, and I never missed a pin. Some of them were a little erratic, and did many silly things on the spur of the moment, but the majority of them were fine characters, taken all round. I found most of them very truthful, even if it was against himself, I could trust him to tell me the truth. As far as I possibly could, I ever tried to keep the memory of his own dear mother in front of him, and if I found he had done something he should not do, I would say to him,

“Do you not see how these things

hurt me, and what would it be if your own mother knew it. It would break her heart." I am happy to say that this in most cases would make the boy pull himself together, and behave better in future. I can honestly say that the welfare of these boys was uppermost in my mind—it almost was an obsession with me—and if ever I met a boy in the streets who was looking at all lonely, or "under the weather" as the saying goes, I invariably stopped and asked him where he was staying, and if I found he wanted looking after, I always invited him to my house. My dear husband was just the same, and it was not out of the ordinary to find he had brought a boy home with him, either for a meal or a night's lodging.

I remember walking along Piccadilly, Manchester, one evening with my husband, during the summer of 1917, and

I saw a soldier sitting on one of the seats alone looking very dejected and ill. I stopped and asked him if he had anywhere to sleep, and he said,

“Yes, I have booked a bed at the Y.M.C.A.”

I then noticed that his right arm was hanging helpless and seemed paralysed, so I questioned him a little more. He told me he had just arrived in Manchester on leave from one of the Buxton Hospitals. I then asked him if he had no friend who could help him, and he said “No.”

I thought he looked neglected and dirty—the lapels of his coat, which should have been white, were soiled and gave him a dirty appearance. I gave him our address, and invited him to come and stay with us, adding:

“Stay at the Y.M.C.A. to-night, and sleep upon it; then, if you like to come in the morning, I shall be very pleased

to see you." He thanked me very much and we wished him "good evening." I said to my husband after leaving him, "I don't think really that he will come; he will find someone to-night to chum up with, and he will forget all about us." I was, however, much mistaken, for he arrived at my door at 8.30 the following morning.

I found in him a quiet, shy young man. He told me his home was at Lakefield, Ontario. I must here mention that I had a large map of Canada on my kitchen wall, and as each boy came to me I asked him to point out his home, and I there put his initials, and even to this day I think of these boys in their distant homes across the sea, and I think of them on that particular spot upon the map.

This man was with me two days before I knew his name, as I always called the fresh boys "Canada." On

the third morning, as soon as he came downstairs, I said to him:

“What is your name, Canada?”

“Francis Theodore Griffiths,” he replied.

“What do they call you at home?” I asked.

“Frank,” he replied.

“Very well,” I said, “I shall call you Frank.”

He was very grateful for all I was doing for him, as he was rather helpless, and when I had cleaned up his uniform he looked very nice and was much improved in health in a few days, I took him about amongst my own friends, which seemed good for him. Another boy came during his stay, from the Discharge Depôt, Buxton, and they went about a good deal together. His leave was drawing to a close, so I asked him if he would like to stay a little longer, and he very quickly agreed. So

I wrote to his O.C. at Buxton, telling him the boy was with me, and asking if he may have an extension of leave, adding that the boy was much better in health under my care. By return post a reply came granting him another six days. One day I said to him,

“Frank, are you married?”

“No,” he replied, “I am not.”

I hardly know how it was, but I somehow felt that he was married, as he did not exactly go about like a single man. Therefore, that same afternoon, when we were having tea together I pretended to read his fortune in his teacup.

“Why, Frank!” I exclaimed, “I thought you told me you were not married! I can actually see your wife in this teacup!”

He blushed to the roots of his hair and replied very confusedly, “Well, I was really going to tell you to-night

that I am married. I have a wife and three children." I learned afterwards that a chum had advised him in Buxton not to admit to anybody that he was married, when on leave, as he would have a much better time and enjoy himself more. However, his conscience began to trouble him, and he had decided to tell me the truth that night.

"Did you really see it in my cup?" he asked.

"No, you silly boy!" I said. "I guessed you were a married man."

This episode began a very sincere friendship. He went back to Buxton at the end of six days, looking much better and happier. We correspond to this day, and his little son even sends letters to his "Grandma" in England.

Early one Saturday morning, a French Canadian came to my door. I had never seen him before, and he asked me to lend him ten shillings.

I told him that all the money I possessed at that moment was two shillings and sixpence. But why did he want to borrow? He said another boy in the same hospital had told him I would lend it to him. He had not money to write home or to buy cigs. Well, in the end I lent him the two and sixpence and he said,

“I will give you an I O U for it.”

I replied, “I do not want an I O U. An I O U would be no use to me if you are not honest. You know you have borrowed it and I know you have—that should be enough for honest people.” He told me the name of the hospital—Meadow Bank. I did not hear from him or see him again for three months, but he sent me a postal order for three shillings from Liverpool, before he sailed for Canada. I had really said “good-bye” to it, but I was pleased for his own sake. I have heard from him

several times since he has returned to Canada.

I am relating these little episodes to show the inner side of the Canadian boys. I found in them a great sense of honour. Again, apart from their honesty and truthfulness, I found they had a great sense of humour. They loved playing jokes upon me, which I received in the same spirit, and the fun we had was contagious.

I remember one morning (Primrose Day) receiving a box of primroses from my old home in Shropshire, where they grow in great profusion, and one of my boys was having his breakfast. His name was Fred Reed, who came from Woodstock, Ontario. He looked at the flowers and said,

“Those are pretty, Mother.”

“Yes,” I said, “they are, Fred. I think they are my favourite flowers.”

I think they are lovely!"; and, just by way of banter I added, "They are real English you know. Do you have primroses in Canada,"

He did not reply, so I repeated the question, "Do you have any primroses in Canada, Fred?"

"Yes, I think we do, Mother; but we call them *weeds* in Canada." He was highly amused to see my chagrin and I boxed his ear. When he thought my wrath had cooled down he told me he had never seen a primrose until he came to England.

When he left me he went to Ripon to Camp, and he sent me a long letter full of description of the country round, and telling me he had seen some lovely violets in a wood near there and the scent was beautiful, and saying he was enclosing a few in a letter for me to smell! However, he had forgotten to enclose the violets, so I just sent him a

postcard with these words: "Dear Fred,—The violets you did *not* send did smell beautiful.—Mother." Back by return post came a small box full of violets, and telling me he would have loved to send some primroses but dare not.

CHAPTER V.

One afternoon I was sitting with a young Canadian soldier in hospital and he was very ill with lung trouble. He was showing me photographs of his home and his parents, when the nurse handed him a letter which conveyed the news of his mother's death. Poor boy! his grief was tragic and my heart went out to him. I showed him as much sympathy as I could and gave him the usual invitation, telling him to come whenever he wished to do. After that he spent every leave with me whilst in England.

One morning I had a hurried letter from him from Bramshott Camp, where he was stationed, in which he said,

“Mother! what do you think? They want to send me back to Canada, without seeing you, and without saying ‘Good-bye,’ but I’ll watch it, and will see you, for I will jump it.” I wrote back at once telling him that, much as I would love to see him, he must not get himself into trouble over it. Two mornings after that, about four o’clock, my husband woke me up saying there was a knock at the front door. I waited until the knock was repeated and got up to the front window and opened it. Looking down, I saw this boy looking up at me and he said, “Hello! Mother; I’ve come!” I went downstairs immediately and brought him in. Shall I ever forget that morning? He was so cold. I hastened and made a good roaring fire, and got him some hot coffee and poached eggs on toast, before I would allow him to say anything about his journey. When he had

finished his meal, he began telling me of his adventures since leaving camp.

It appears that a day or two previously he had asked his sergeant if he would get him a pass for Manchester, but the sergeant refused, as he wanted to ask for one for himself. Fred, however, had a chum who had already secured a pass, so he went to him and said, "Lend me your pass for about ten minutes; I'll take care of it." He got the pass and went to the sergeant and said,

"You see, I've got a pass, although you wouldn't ask for one for me."

"Have you?" replied sergeant, with surprise. "Has the officer signed it?"

"Yes, he has," said Fred, showing sergeant the signature of the officer.

"Oh, well, I'm glad," said sergeant. "Off you go, lad. I hope you will enjoy yourself."

With those words the sergeant bade

him go at once, "so of course," said Fred, "I had to do as the sergeant told me."

He did not travel from Bramshott Station on account of Redcaps, who were very keen on examining passes, and as Fred was travelling without a pass he had to be careful—so he walked to a small station some distance away, and booked to Manchester. He arrived in London all right, and was just on his way crossing to Euston when a Redcap held him up and asked him for his pass.

"Well! I guess you are asking for something I haven't got," said Fred.

"Very well, then," said Redcap, "come with me."

He accompanied the Redcap to the station. The ticket examiner passed Fred into the platform, but would not allow Redcap in as he had no ticket, and Fred caught sight of a luggage train just moving slowly out of the station,

and he made a dash for it, and vaulted over the side of an empty coal wagon, and quietly stooped in the one corner, and watched the consternation of Redcap, who could not understand where Fred had vanished to. How we laughed at the thought of Redcap's discomfiture.

"Did you know the luggage train was coming to Manchester?" I asked.

"No," said Fred. "I did not care much where it was going, so long as I got rid of Redcap."

Fortunately, the first stop of that train was Crewe, where Fred changed at 2 a.m., and got into a train for Manchester, and came straight home.

When he arrived two more boys were in possession of the bed, so when he had finished telling me of his journey and had got thoroughly warm, I went upstairs and asked the other boys to get up so that Fred could go and have

a good sleep and rest after his long, cold journey.

Fred remained with me for nearly three weeks, and had the time of his life. Then I advised him to go back, as I was afraid he would be badly punished when he returned to camp. My dear husband and I went with him to the station, to see him off, and many were the tears I shed for I knew I would not see him again.

Three or four days afterwards I heard from him telling me that he did not think he had been missed by the authorities, as the sergeant had told them he was on leave, "but," says Fred, "I kind of think the old colonel guesses something by the way he looks at me, but he hasn't said anything."

CHAPTER VI.

Buxton was a discharge depôt for the Canadian soldiers, in addition to having three or four large Canadian hospitals, and I visited Buxton fairly often to see the different boys who made their home with me. During one of my visits I made the acquaintance of a young man from Winnipeg, who was on crutches. He had only just arrived in Buxton and seemed very lonely. I took him for a cup of tea and a chat, and in the end I invited him to make his home with me when he was convalescent. We became great friends and I found in him a fine character. I went to see him as well as other boys almost weekly, and they all looked forward to my visits.

One afternoon I remember so well, about six of the boys were anxious to take me to the Opera House, so it was settled that they should all take me, so we all went together. Outside the entrance to the Opera House a dispute arose as to who should pay for me, as they all wanted to pay. Whilst they were arguing, I quietly walked in the house and paid for myself, so that was settled.

The young man I spoke of came from Winnipeg, and his name was Norman Burnett. One day I had a hurried letter from him with only a few words, thus: "Dear mother—I am getting married in the morning. Can I bring my wife to you for our honeymoon?—Wire, N.B."

I had just had two boys with me for ten days, and had only that morning seen them off back to camp. Therefore, the idea of a bride coming was a bit

awkward, as I was anxious to clean up after the boys had gone, and before the honeymooners arrived, so I rushed off to the post office and sent the following message:—"Much happiness to both. Don't come to-day, come to-morrow.—Mother." When I arrived home from the post office, I was dumbfounded with amazement to find Norman on the doorstep, awaiting my return, with his bride.

He explained, after introducing his wife, that he did not wait for my wire but came away immediately they were married as he knew I would not turn them away. They had come to me for ten days, and they had a wonderfully happy time. She was a very sweet girl and made herself very much at home with me. After they had been with me a week, and their honeymoon was drawing to a close, I took upon myself to write to his C.O. telling him what a happy time these two were having, and

if he would grant them an extension of another few days. I enclosed a stamped addressed envelope for reply, but two days afterwards I received a wire from the O.C. with this message:—"Give them another ten days.—O.C."

When the honeymooners were aware of what I had done, and saw the reply Norman danced me round and round my kitchen in his excitement, and they took us all to the theatre to celebrate the event. When they left me, I did not see them again before they went to Canada, but they are counted amongst my dearest friends.

When the boys came to me I always made a point of letting them have their breakfast in bed, that is, if they came from France, but, if they only came from camp, I would just take them up a cup of tea, and made them get up for breakfast. I took the boys all amongst my friends and they were all made wel-

come. One Christmas, I had six with me, and what a wonderful week it was. I had all ranks from 2nd-Lieutenant to private. They were all so friendly and happy together, all rank was forgotten, and it was a real joy to have them. These boys would always visit the hospital with me when on leave, as it was in this hospital I met most of them.

I remember meeting one boy who had been wounded in the leg. He was a descendent from the Indians, and was a fine lad. He was like many more, he would do most erratic things on the spur of the moment.

Fridays, as a rule, I kept for my own house, and to write letters for the wounded, having had the letters given to me after visiting on Thursday. I was very busy cleaning up one Friday when this boy mentioned above came hobbling into my house with his crutches and

said, "Mother, get a hustle on, I've booked a couple of seats for us at the Palace. You've got to come and hear Nellie Wallace!" I remonstrated with him telling him it was impossible, but he would hear of no denial, and I had to leave my work and go with him. He was eventually transferred to another hospital in Manchester in Moss Side, then to a V.A.D. hospital near London. He came to me several times on leave, and on the last leave he told me of an episode which took place when he was in the V.A.D. hospital.

It appears the boys from his hospital received an invitation as guests to another hospital, the hospital where Princess Mary was nurse. During their tea, he said to the nurse, who was attending to his wants, "Nurse, isn't this the hospital where Princess Mary is?" "Yes," she replied. "Will you

kindly point her out to me?" he asked, "as I would like to see her." "Would you?" she replied. "Well, I am Princess Mary!"

The boy was so confused, and could hardly speak, but he said that Princess Mary showed him the utmost thought and kindness all the evening afterwards.

This was about the fourth leave he had had with me, and the morning he was going away, he said, "Well, mother, I don't think I will ever see you again, for if I again go to France, I shall be killed!"

"Oh, Ward!" I said, "don't say that."

"I am confident of it, mother," he said, and, laying his hand on his breast, "I feel it here."

I went to the station with him feeling very sad, because he seemed sad. Enough to say that he went out again

in two weeks and was killed in less than a month, much to my regret and sorrow. I got all details from his officer. This boy came from Iriquois, and his name was Ward Ault.

CHAPTER VII.

I will here tell you of an experience I had in the matrimonial market. I went down one Sunday to hospital, soon after the Ypres battle, and found a man very ill in a state of coma, where he lay several days. He had lost his leg, and was very weak from loss of blood. When he regained consciousness, he was able to tell us who he was and where he lived. He asked me to write to his father in B.C. and tell him all about his wounds.

In the days of war, letters overseas were some time reaching their destination, and it was quite three months before I received an answer to my letter. This letter was full of gratitude to me

for having sent news of his son, as he had received word from official quarters that his son was missing. He told me their whole history, and said that he himself had emigrated to Canada, when Ted was twelve years of age, from Norway, and he had become a naturalised Canadian. He said that the proudest day of his life was when his son had joined up to fight under the British flag. He went on with these words: "You tell me, dear madam, that my dear son has lost his leg. What does it matter so long as it is buried in English soil!"

I wrote him again assuring him that his son was well looked after and that I, as a mother, would tend him and give him a home when he was convalescent. This boy eventually got much better and was able to get about on crutches. He had a great pal from the next bed, a Scotsman, who had also lost a leg, and these two men have spent hours in

my house. Jock was a very fine man, not very young, and a man of deep religious feeling. Time came when they had to part, each being sent to their respective hospitals. Ted went to the Palace Hotel hospital at Buxton for some weeks, and was then transferred to a discharge dépôt at Old Swan, Liverpool, prior to his return to Canada.

During his stay at Old Swan, he made the acquaintance of a young lady, who visited the hospital, and fell deeply in love with her. He was, however, sent back to Canada before he could bring things to a proper understanding between them; he therefore commenced corresponding with her. In the end he proposed marriage to her, and also wrote to her father telling him of his position, which, I believe, was in the salmon fisheries and canning business.

Some months followed when I one day received a letter from him, telling

me that he could not get any satisfaction from her father, and asked me if I would go to Liverpool to see the father and propose for her hand in his place. This was certainly a tall order, but no boy had ever asked me to do a job for him which I funked. I wrote to the gentleman telling him I was coming, on behalf of Mr. Teddy Jacoby, and I went the following week.

The young lady herself met me at the station and took me to her home at Old Swan, where I met her father and step-mother. They both treated me very kindly and had prepared for me. We soon sat down to luncheon, and afterwards her father and I went into the drawing room to have our "talk." The first thing which caught my eye on entering was a very large picture on the piano of Teddy, which I thought looked "healthy." I opened the conversation thus:

“ Well, Mr. Hughes, you quite understand my errand, do you not? ”

“ Yes, Mrs. Bagshaw, I do,” he replied, “ and I must tell you how much I admire you for taking so much trouble to come over here and do what you are doing for this young gentleman. All I can say is that I cannot consent to her going over to him.”

“ What is your reason? ” I asked.

“ Well,” he said, “ for one thing, she is all I have left of my dear first wife, and I cannot consent, even if every hair of his head hung with a diamond ! ”

At this moment his daughter came into the room and he addressed her thus—

“ I am telling Mrs. Bagshaw, Elsie, how much I admire her for what she has done in the past for our soldiers which I have read about, and especially for what she is doing now for Mr. Jacoby. I quite believe all Mrs. Bag-

shaw says about this young gentleman, that he is upright and straight ; indeed, his letters to me have pointed that out, but I have told Mrs. Bagshaw also, Elsie, that I cannot agree to your going out to him, for you are all I have left of your dear mother, and I cannot part with you." With this he burst into tears, and she rushed to him and threw her arms around him, also weeping, and said, " I don't want to part with you, Daddy, but I do love Teddy."

" Well, Elsie," he said, " I will be fair to you. If you are in the same mind when you are of age, you may please yourself. You have your own future to map out, but never will I consent beforehand." I did not attempt to persuade either father or daughter in Ted's favour, but thought it best to see what time would bring. I simply told him what I knew of Teddy and how I loved and admired him.

Afterwards we had tea and I prepared to leave them, Elsie coming with me to the station. As we sat in the station waiting for the train, she turned impulsively to me and said, "What shall I do, Mrs. Bagshaw? Do advise me."

"My dear," I replied, "I will advise you to go on your knees to-night and every day, and ask God to guide you aright, and He will assuredly point out a way for you. I shall not advise you one way or the other, for you have your father to consider also. All I know is that Teddy is a good man and will make you a good husband. If I had an only daughter, he is just the man I would give her to."

We parted with a mutual understanding, and a year passed ere I heard from her again, and one morning I received this brief note.

"Dear Mrs. Bagshaw,—I thought I ought to write and tell you that

I was twenty-one a month ago, and I sail for Canada and Teddy next month. Many thanks for all you have done.—E.H.”

She sailed for Canada the next month and Teddy travelled from British Columbia to meet her, and they were married immediately. They have now a little family and are happily settled in British Columbia, where his father and stepmother are near neighbours, and according to photographs they send me, they live in a charming spot, in a beautifully wooded country spot.

Two more friends of the above came together to me, such nice men ; one was named Lee Bayley, and the other Bert McLeod. Even after they left the hospital they continued to visit me. As a rule, these boys would have about ten days or two weeks leave, and they would spend the first week in Scotland or Ireland and then end up at my house.

Lee Bayley spent the first week of his leave in London, and then finished up with me. He was a fine boy with beautiful character and very dependable. He eventually was transferred to Buxton, and was in the sergeant's mess at the discharge depôt. He would come to me on a week's leave and wish me "good-bye," then he would go back and find he was not missed, so he just walked to Miller's Dale station and come back again. I generally had him home again by tea-time. He did this for several weeks until at last he set sail for Canada. We have always kept up a correspondence. He eventually married a nice wife and settled down, and the picture of their little girl is before me as I write these words. Bert McLeod settled in Saskatoon, but I regret to say I have lost touch with him.

I would like to bear testimony to the matron of Roby Street Hospital, Sister

Morris, who was always so good and kind, and allowed me to have access to these boys at any time, and brought me in touch with them. It was the young boys I sought, from 17 to 25, the older ones could take care of themselves. As time went on my "family" naturally increased, for I kept extending invitations to any I thought who needed it, and they all gladly accepted it.

I remember a soldier from Richdale, Alberta, asking me what date he should come to me. "You see," he said, "I shall have two weeks; the first week I will go to my father's native place in Ireland, and the next week I will spend with you."

Poor boy! I knew then that he had not many days to live and the next time I reached the hospital he had passed away. I attended his funeral as mourner, and laid a wreath of maple leaves on his grave.

CHAPTER VIII.

I think it was in the latter part of 1916 that I came across a boy named David Hamilton. He was a fair-haired boy about 22 and was badly wounded in hospital, and was also slightly shell-shocked. I attended to all his correspondence and wrote his parents weekly to tell them how he was progressing. His wounds eventually healed, but I regret to say that the shell-shock got worse, and he had to be removed to another hospital.

I continued to visit him at this other hospital as I got very interested in him, and, as I was in continual correspondence with his parents, they were natur-

ally very grateful for news of him. They wrote me continually and sent all kinds of comforts for him to my home, which I always safely delivered to him. Time went on and he did not improve, and it was found necessary to remove him again to another hospital which had a mental ward. I was some time in finding out which hospital he had gone to, but when I got to know, my husband and I went to see him.

Before entering the ward, the nurse warned me that she did not think he would recognise me and she went for the doctor, who watched the result of David's meeting with me through the glass of the door. At first, I just walked up to the bedside and looked at him. He stared very hard at me, as if he was trying to rack his poor brain to grasp who I was. All at once, without warning, he jumped up in bed, and threw his arms round my neck, calling out as

he did so, "It's Mrs. Bagshaw! it's Mrs. Bagshaw!" I told him to lie down quietly again, and soothed him as well as I possibly could, and he became quite calm and rational; in fact, he eventually began asking me about other patients in the other hospital which he had left. It was wonderful the effect our visit had upon him.

When I had left him, the doctor followed me, and asked me if I could come again. I replied that I would come as often as he wished, if it would be of benefit to the boy. He considered it would benefit him much, so I promised I would go twice weekly. It was a good distance from my home—six or seven miles.

During my subsequent visits, he did not seem to improve greatly, and he began asking me about my daughter Janie, and how she was. Being that I had no daughter, these questions

rather nonplussed me, but I humoured him and said she was alright. Every time I saw him it was the same question, "How is Janie?" One day after visiting him, I received word from the doctor telling me they had been obliged to still transfer him to another mental hospital, which was Winwick, near Warrington, as he had to be put under more restraint. I felt much upset by this news and applied for an order to take me to see him. It so happened that "Shure" was coming home that night on leave, and I asked him if he would come with me the day afterwards to see this poor boy. He came willingly, as I told him I thought it might please the boy if I took a Canadian with me.

We went to Warrington by train, and after a long walk we reached the large hospital. We waited in a corridor until they brought the boy to us. Never will I forget the alteration I saw in him. He

looked a complete idiot, did nothing but grin, and water was continually running from his mouth. I regret to say I found about two hundred poor fellows in almost the same condition.

I kept talking to him and asking him how he was, but I could get no satisfactory reply from him, only a silly laugh. I took letters to him from his parents and read them to him, but he took not the slightest notice of them. "Shure" was almost as upset as I was and said, "Let us go, mother, or I shall have to stay here, for it makes me silly to see all these poor fellows like this." So I said to David, "Well, David, I will be going, for you do not know me, and will not speak to me."

All at once he gripped my arm and said, "Yes, I do know you, mother! I do know you, mother! Take me back to Canada! Take me back to Canada! When did you come, mother—when did

you come?" He evidently imagined I was his own mother.

I promised I would come again to him the following week and before going away I sought the doctor to enquire about David, and told him what he had said about going back to Canada, and advised the M.O. to return him to Canada so that he could be among his own people, and see his own mother.

"Shure" and I returned home feeling very sad after the sights we had seen, and feeling how helpless we were in the matter.

Four days afterwards I had word from the M.O. telling me that David had started on his homeward journey that morning. I was very glad and thankful for his own sake that he had gone, little thinking that I had not heard the last of him.

I was still in continual touch with his people in Canada, and trying to hide,

as best I could, his real condition. I did eventually send word to his mother hinting at his mental condition, to prepare her for what she would eventually see for herself.

As soon as it was possible for me to hear after his return to Canada, I did hear from his mother, telling me that he seemed much better but was still in hospital. After about six months had gone by, I was amazed one morning to get a letter in his handwriting, and another also, addressed to Miss Janie Bagshaw. The first-named letter was to ask my permission if I would allow my daughter Janie, to be engaged to him. The one to Janie was a proposal of marriage and asking her to go out to him. I racked my brains to try and find out how he had got mixed up with "Janie" and me. On enquiry, I found that one of the nurses at the first V.A.D. hospital which he went to was named

Janie, and it was because of his marked attention to her that he was removed to another hospital as she was afraid of him.

Shoals of letters reached my house from Canada for Janie and myself, and some of them were absolute piffle, showing the state of his brain, poor fellow. One day I gathered up all his letters and took them down to this particular hospital to show Janie. (Janie, by the way, was the daughter of one of our leading Manchester tradesmen). She received me ever so kindly, and I asked her to advise me what to do.

She said, "Oh, Mrs. Bagshaw, tell him I am dead, for I certainly am dead to him."

I came away, making up my mind I would do this, as I was anxious to get it out his mind that there was no Janie, and, although it was really a lie, it was an abstract one, and one in which

I think I was justified. Next day I wrote him telling him Janie was dead. Back came a letter, as soon as was possible, deeply edged with black, full of profound sorrow and sympathy, asking me where she was buried, and added that he would never rest until he saw her grave. I replied to his letter and answered his questions as elusively as I possibly could, without appearing to do so. The letters to Janie ceased, but he still kept writing to me in the same strain, and I replied in the same elusive manner.

One day, however, I was fated to receive a grim shock. I received a letter from him posted in London the day before, telling me to expect him that same evening. Shall I ever forget that day? Never!

My husband treated it as a huge joke and said, "Hurry up, you'll have David at the door shortly with a wreath."

I could not look upon it in that light;

I felt it was really very serious, but I asked God to help me through this difficulty, and I did not worry further.

I went to the station that night to meet the troop trains; he did not come but Fred Elgear, the boy of coal-wagon fame, came by it and took me home. I told him all about David and what a muddle I had let myself in for. He said, "Never mind, mother, I won't leave you a moment in his company alone, but will see you through it all." I then asked Fred if he thought it would be best for me to tell David the real truth about Janie, but he advised me not to do so, as he may possibly take it the wrong way. "Leave him to me, mother," said Fred, "I will take him up to the cemetery and I'll show him some grave."

We all waited up that night until after midnight, and as we decided at last to go to bed, I can assure you I breathed a sigh of intense relief that he had not

arrived. Providence surely was with me and especially so was I certain of it in the morning when the post came telling me that David could not come to Manchester as he was ordered back on the boat on which he came; he had worked his passage with a cargo of horses.

Never shall I forget the relief that letter brought me. I immediately went upstairs to my room and thanked God upon my knees for coming to my aid.

It is now quite five years since I heard anything of him. I heard then that he had married and settled down, so that "Janie" was quite forgotten.

CHAPTER IX. ,

Some little time before the Armistice was signed, a knock came to my door and I answered it myself. A Canadian soldier stood there and said, "I guess I am at the right house?"

"I guess you are," I replied, "for I see you have a maple leaf on your hat. Come in."

"Anyway, mother," he said, "I have no money."

"That is a complaint many of you suffer from," I replied, "and I am not aware that I have asked you for any."

"Well, it's like this, mother," he said, "I have been sent here by the Y.M.C.A.; they said you would give me shelter for nothing."

“How is it you have no money?”
I asked.

He answered by telling me how he had got rid of his money in a foolhardy way. I could easily understand it after the boy had been with me a day or two, for he was most erratic and impulsive. It appears that he started from Buxton with a chum on bicycles, but one of the wheels “crooked” up by New Mills and they took a taxi (or cab) from there to Manchester. The other man had a wife in Manchester and promised this boy he would meet him at the Y.M.C.A. next morning with some money. He did not do so, however, hence the reason of his being stranded. I told him he could stay, and at once lent him 5/- to carry on. His feet were in a terrible state, and the boots he had were hard and too tight for him, so I took him to a shoe shop near by and bought him a pair and gave 28/6 for them. In those days things

were very dear. Of course, these were bought on his promise to repay when he got his pay.

The next morning I asked to look at his pass and found he had only one more day, so I told him he must return to Buxton next morning.

I found that this boy was an American who had joined the Canadian Army; he came from Iowa. He joined up the day after the Lusitania went down.

Through his erratic and impulsive nature I had a good deal of trouble with him. I was quite determined he should go back, but I was mistaken for he disappeared that night and I saw or heard no more of him for four days.

A youth presented himself at my house and brought me a note telling me that the boy was ill in a lodging-house in a slum part of Manchester. I was very much upset as I had written his officer

to tell him he had left me.

I went almost immediately to the lodging-house where I found him in bed. He owed the landlady 3/6 and had no money wherewith to pay. I paid the 3/6 and the boots I had bought for him had been stolen from under the bed.

He could not get up to come out as he had no boots, so I asked the youth who had brought the note if he would lend the boy his boots whilst I took him to buy another pair. He did so, and I bought another pair—a second-hand pair for 12/6 as I could not afford another new pair.

Next morning I insisted upon his going back, and said I would take him to Buxton myself. I started off with him but had occasion to call at the Y.M.C.A. to see the Matron on business, and, although I was only with her about three minutes, he gave me the slip.

I think my feelings can be more

readily imagined than described. I decided then to wash my hands of him and worry no more about him.

Three days afterwards I received a letter from an officer at Buxton telling me that the boy had reported back at camp, and that he had walked from Manchester to Buxton. He had explained to the officer that he was ashamed of my paying his fare and my own to Buxton, so he made up his mind to walk. The officer further explained to me that the boy was very ill and feverish, and that he had been put in hospital. The boy, however, would write me in a day or two.

I learned afterwards that the boy had been transferred to one of the Birmingham hospitals as the hospitals in Buxton had become closed. About a month afterwards I had a most pathetic letter from him asking me why I did not write.

“Are you getting ‘fed up’ with me,

mother, or what? I am very lonesome here and want to hear from you."

I felt a bit sorry for the boy and sent him a few cigarettes and a nice letter telling him I had not been well myself, hence my excuse for not writing.

Two or three days afterwards I had a note brought to my door by a little child from him, saying he had walked from Birmingham to see me because I was sick. I was horrified to find he had left hospital without leave. I learned afterwards that when he received my letter he went straight to the M.O. and asked for four days leave, saying his "mother" was sick in Manchester and he wanted to see her. The M.O. refused permission, telling him he was still unfit to leave hospital; he made no more ado, but walked straight out of hospital and made for Manchester. He arrived with practically no shoes on his feet, and no money in his pockets.

After giving him a good scolding, I made him go to bed, and next morning I took him to headquarters at Buxton and delivered him up. I, however, appealed to the O.C. to withdraw any punishment to which I was afraid he was entitled.

The O.C. was very much annoyed and vexed with him, and told me I worried too much over these d—— scamps. He could not, he said, help any punishment he may get as it rested with the O.C. at Birmingham. I still appealed to him to use his influence. Subsequently, he promised he would do what he could for my sake, but not for that young scamp.

I asked him would he allow the boy to come with me for tea and he said "Yes." So I took the boy to the tea-room and I gave him a long, serious talk, trying to make him realise the great trouble and expense he was causing me. I explained to him very earn-

estly that I was trying to fill his mother's place over here, and did he think he was treating me fairly? Well, it ended up in tears, and the boy seemed sorry and full of contrition. He promised me faithfully he would behave himself in future. I appealed to his honour to go straight back to camp, and he did so.

A month or so went by, and my health became a little run down and I was ordered to Buxton to recuperate. During my stay my husband sent me on a telegram which had arrived from London which read as follows:

"Coming home Saturday, Canada leave. Wire Beaver Club, London.—Hamer."

This was from the boy mentioned above, so I wired back immediately—

"Home in Manchester closed to visitors; am in Buxton Hospital.—Mother."

I heard nothing more until the following Saturday, when he turned up at Buxton. He looked so nice and had on a new uniform. He looked well, too. He said he had come to spend his last leave with me, as he was booked for Canada as soon as possible.

The next day he took me out, and we sat on the slopes at Buxton, where he asked me to tell him how much he owed me.

"I hardly know, laddie," I said. "It is a good bit you know; but I daresay I will be able to reckon up."

"Gee!" he replied, "if you don't know who should; and well, anyway, I know."

Much to my surprise he had down every penny I had spent upon him. I was so amazed, as I always thought he was so erratic. I am happy to say he paid me every penny he owed me.

Two days afterwards I had a wire

from his O.C. addressed thus:

“To the Canadians’ Little Mother,
Devonshire Hospital, Buxton. Send
Parker back immediately. Sailing
Wednesday.—O.C.”

He returned to London that night,
and I saw him off. We parted with
many regrets and he sailed the follow-
ing Wednesday. I heard from him
many times after his return home, but
latterly have lost all touch with him.

I had another experience with an
American boy who was in the Canadian
Army. Many, many times do I think
of this boy and the many heartaches he
gave to me, for I did not get into
touch with him until it was too late for
me to make anything of him or reclaim
him in any way. I think I have men-
tioned earlier that I was ever on the
look-out for the very young Canadian
soldier. Well, this boy was not very
young, perhaps about twenty-seven.

I had seen him many times knocking about the streets, many times the worse for drink. He was mostly alone, and I longed to speak to him, for I could see he was here in Manchester without leave, or that he had overstayed his leave.

One day I had an opportunity of speaking to him through another soldier, and after asking him a few questions I found that I had guessed aright and that he was here without leave from Buxton. I looked out for him each day I went to Hospital, and he looked forward to my visits and watched out for me. Whenever I spoke seriously to him about his mode of living, and about his own mother, it always brought tears. I asked him to give himself up to the authorities, as it would be so much better for him, but he would not do so. I took him to a tea-room several times and gave him a

good meal, but I never gave him money, because I knew he would only spend it on drink. His name was George Mayas and he came from Michigan. His eyes would always fill with tears when I spoke to him of his mother, and and he would always proudly show me her photograph. I told him he could come to me if he would only keep from the drink, and that he must never go in bad company. He told me he had heard all about me from the other boys, "but, Mother," he said, "I shall not come to your place because I am not fit to come, for I have been in bad company, and I would never come and sleep in your boy's bed because of it." I did my very utmost for the boy, for my heart ached for him. How I wished he was at home with his own mother, for perhaps she could have saved him. He began to grow thin, and I felt sure he was neglecting himself. I wrote the authorities

in Buxton (who began to know me) and asked them to bring this boy back to camp, and I told them where they were likely to find him. Two days afterwards I was going down one of the streets and I was aware of an S.M. with the boy on the opposite side of the street, and that he was under arrest. Just as I saw them, he saw me, and rushed across to me from the S.M. "Mother," he said, "don't let him take me; don't let him take me!" "Why," said I, "what's the trouble?" The S.M. then explained that they were having a "round-up" of soldiers who were listed to return to Canada. Well, we had quite a lot of trouble to get this boy to go quietly, and I asked him if he would go if I came with him, and he said "Yes." I walked along with him, and I asked the S.M. if he would allow me to take him for a meal: he did so, and I took him to the State Café in Piccadilly and gave him

some tea, the S.M. standing at the door to see that he did not give me the slip. When we came out he was aware that the S.M. was near and said he would not walk if the S.M. accompanied us, so the S.M. and I had a whispered consultation. I said I would walk with him to the station and get into a carriage with the boy until he came. This we did. The boy was ever so pleased to have my company, and I kept up a conversation about his home and his mother and asked him to write to me. I had already written to his mother to tell her that the boy was booked for home. The boy promised to write to me and tell me all about the journey. I waited in the carriage until I got a sign from the S.M., who had already arrived in the station. He signed to me as soon as the train was signalled to go, and I whipped out of the carriage and the S.M. jumped in. I did not hear anything of this boy for

about two months, when the S.M. called at my house to thank me for the help I had given him that day, and to tell me that the poor boy died before they landed at Portland, Maine. He went into rapid consumption and he was carried off quickly, poor boy! I am afraid dissipation had been the means of bringing it on. Some little time afterwards I heard from his poor mother, telling me of his death, but she was entirely ignorant of how he spent that unauthorised leave in Manchester.

CHAPTER X.

Another adventure in the matrimonial line connected with the Canadian boys was with one from New Ontario, named Nelson. He wrote me asking if I could find him a wife.

"You know exactly the wife that would suit me, Mother, because you know the kind of chap I am. I have a nice little farm and a nice little shack, and I have thought a lot about the nice girls I met in England, especially the nice girls you had coming to see you. Could you introduce me to one of them with that view in sight?"

I felt that this was a very tall order, and a very responsible one, and I replied

to his letter telling him how I felt the seriousness of it. He wrote again telling me he could rely on my judgment, and whoever she was he would make her a good husband.

It so happened that some time previously I had met a Scotch girl at Buxton. She took to me and I to her, as she had recently lost her parents. From that time I mothered her and she came occasionally to see me. One day (after receiving the request from Nelson) she was having an afternoon with me, and I was showing her some photographs. She was deeply interested and pointing to the one on which Nelson and I are taken together, she said:

“This is a nice laddie, Mother. What’s his name?”

“Nelson,” I replied, “and, by the way, Mabel, he has written asking if I will find him a wife. What do you

think of it? ”

“ Would I do, Mother? ” she asked.

“ I am sure you would, Mabel,” I replied. “ You would just suit him. He is a quiet, steady fellow, and you are bright and lively. I think you would exactly suit him.”

“ Well, I’m game, Mother. Will you introduce us, and if all goes well I will settle in Canada, where I have always wished to go.”

“ Well, Mabel, I want you to understand that life is very different out in Canada, and in the country places you are often hundreds of miles away from towns and other villages. You must understand it is entirely different from the life round Manchester.”

“ Oh! that is nothing, Mother,” she said. “ I am used to the life on a Scotch farm and we were miles away from a city.”

The outcome of this episode was that I wrote to Nelson sending Mabel's photograph and giving Mabel's address. He responded by writing to her, and also by writing to me to thank me for the introduction.

The courtship by correspondence went on swimmingly for about nine months. Then a little cloud came in the horizon, and some misunderstanding took place—and they ceased correspondence. Mabel was then in the South of England. She wrote me at once, telling me that a misunderstanding had taken place, and asked me to find out the cause, as she could not fathom it. I wrote Nelson at once asking the reason, telling him that Mabel was far too good a girl to be trifled with. He replied by blaming Mabel, saying she had broken off. I then wrote to both of them, telling them they were not babies, and I was washing my hands of it, and

they must settle their own misunderstandings themselves.

The next thing that took place in regard to these two was that Nelson sent me a sum of money to buy Mabel an engagement ring. So they had settled their differences themselves.

I did not spend all the money on the engagement ring, but gave Mabel the balance to prepare her bottom drawer, as I felt it would not be long ere she went over to Canada. She sailed the following Spring, Nelson having sent her passage and all money necessary for her long trip. I travelled to Liverpool to see her off, and saw the boat sail away. That is the last I saw of Mabel.

I soon had word, however, of her safe arrival in Canada, and being met by Nelson and his mother. They were married immediately, and quite a happy time they had I believe.

Since then I hear at stated intervals,

and they are very happy on their little farm in New Ontario. Some years have passed, and she tells me she has never regretted the step she took, although she went out to marry a man she had never seen.

CHAPTER XI.

In addition to having these boys I was attending hospital regularly, on Thursdays and Sundays particularly, the boys often accompanying me. I felt I could not live without attending the hospital, and my dear husband was the same. On Sundays we felt we could not enjoy a meal without a soldier to share it with us. Not only the boy with the maple leaf shared our table, but any boy who wore khaki was welcome.

On one occasion I had a soldier from nearly every part of the Empire together to tea (except India) and what a jolly gathering it was, and every boy was calling me "Mother." New Zea-

land, Australia, Canada, South Africa, England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales, with also a native New Zealand soldier—a Maori.

I cannot make anyone understand the joy these little gatherings gave us, for our love and our reverence for all the boys who fought and died for us was without measure; we felt we could not do enough for them.

Many people have said to me, "Do you not find it expensive to have these boys?" My reply was, "Well, they have to share what we are having." Sometimes during the war I was unable to get much food, and was glad to have a soldier's ration card to augment our table, but whatever was on, the food was shared with everyone who came. If the boys met a sweetheart I encouraged him to bring her home to me, just as if he was my own son. I satisfied myself that the boys each understood.

me, and I firmly believe that not one of them would willingly do me a dirty trick. I think the Maple Leaf boy was very easy to understand, and his fund of humour was a wonderful exhilarating tonic.

I well remember one boy coming in rather late one night and I was very worried about him. He was twenty-five years of age, and I will call him "Tom." My husband said, "Don't worry, perhaps he has gone to a show." Soon afterwards he came in and I remarked:

"You are late to-night, Tom. Have you been to a show?"

"No, Mother," he said, "I have been out to supper, but, do you know, I could not find the way back to this house. I kept walking round and round the same block. I cannot understand your streets here. It puzzles me how anybody can find their way about. I've had to ask the way to this house."

Just at this moment a loud knock came at the front door. I answered it immediately and to my horror a policeman was at the door accompanied by a woman. He said,

“Has a soldier just entered this house?”

“Yes,” I replied.

“Well, I want to speak to him,” he said.

I walked back into the sitting room. “Tom,” I said, “you are wanted.”

He came immediately forward.

“Well, officer, what is the matter?” he asked.

“Is this your home,” asked the policeman.

“Yes,” replied Tom, “this is my home while I am in England. I am a Canadian soldier.”

Tom then came into the sitting room and brought me to the door.

“Officer,” he said, “this is my mother

during my stay in England. Say what you have to say in front of her."

"Very well," said the officer. "I want to know what your dealings were with this woman." (The woman was crying.)

"My dealings with this lady!" ejaculated Tom. "I asked her if she could direct me to this house, as I had lost my way, and she kindly did so and I gave her a shilling for her services"; and turning to the woman he asked,

"Were you satisfied, madam?"

"Oh, yes," she said, "but this policeman has just insinuated something which has upset me very much, for I am a respectable woman."

Tom immediately raised his fist to hit the officer, but I caught his arm and said,

"Tom, it is against the law here to hit an officer, no matter what the provocation; you must not hit!"

"Is it the law of this country to insult

a respectable woman?" he asked.

My husband here interposed, and told Tom that the officer was only out to protect the soldier. This did not appease him at all.

"Before the officer leaves this door," said Tom, "he must apologise to this lady for his mistake. If he does not, I will report him to headquarters. He must also apologise to my mother for upsetting her," for by this time I was also in tears.

The end of this matter was that the officer apologised to both of us and said he was sorry for the mistake he had made. So he and the woman departed.

When we got inside the house again, I faced Tom and said,

"Tom, have you been in bad company. Tell me the truth, because if you have you must not sleep in that bed."

"No, Mother," he replied, gravely; "I have not been in bad company."

“Tom, I beg you tell me the truth. Have you been in bad company”—I was weeping very bitterly, and my dear husband put his arm round me—“because,” I said, “that bed you sleep in belonged to a good, pure lad, who has given his life for his country, and you shall not desecrate it!”

“Mother! Mother!” he repeated, “I have not been in bad company. If I had I would never enter your house, for I have too much reverence for you.”

After I had calmed down, he told me how it had all come about. He had lost his bearings of the district, as he said before, and he was walking round a block the third time when he saw the lady standing at her own doorway, and he approached her, asking the way to my house. She had recognised that he was a Canadian soldier, and as my house was well known in the district for having them, she knew where he was

staying and offered to walk to the end of our street to show him the way. She did so, then he gave her a shilling. Tom said he saw the officer watch him give her the money, hence his visit to my house, much to Tom's disgust as to how they treated women in this country. He wanted very much to go and report to the Town Hall, but I advised him not to do so. Whether he did or not I do not know, but it was strange that the policeman mentioned in the episode was removed the following week from that district.

I was much interested in a boy who was from a Dr. Barnardo's Home. He went to Canada when he was twelve years of age, joined up, went through the war, and went back to Canada with enough money saved from his pay in the army to set himself up in a farm. I have lost touch with him now for some years, but the last I heard of him was

in Winnipeg.

A wonderfully strange coincidence happened in regard to two brothers, named Golden. I got into touch with them through their brother-in-law named Murphy, who had been invalided home to Canada. He wrote me some time after his return to Canada, asking me if I would "mother" his young brother-in-law who was just coming over to England. He said he had already written to the other brother-in-law, who was in France, and told him to come to me when he had a leave. A day or two afterwards I had a letter from the boy in France, telling me of his intention to come to me when the time came.

About a month after this I was busy in my home doing my housework when a telegram arrived with these words,

"Will be with you this evening, seven o'clock.—Golden." This wire had been

handed in at Bramshott, and had arrived about 10.30 a.m.

About 2.30 in the afternoon a knock came to the door and on going to it I was aware it was a soldier I had not seen before.

"I suppose you are Mr. Golden," I said.

"Yes, I am," he replied.

"You have arrived earlier than you thought," I remarked. "I got your wire about half-past ten."

"I haven't sent a wire!" he said.

"Not sent one!" I ejaculated. "Why here it is," showing him the wire. —

"Oh, it's my baby brother, my baby brother," he kept saying, "and I haven't seen him for four years."

Needless to say we had a jolly night that night. I asked a few friends to come in and celebrate the event of the two brothers meeting so strangely, for neither had told the other they were

coming to me. I thought this a very remarkable coincidence.

They had a very happy time together and were with me a full week. I took them amongst my own friends and I was sorry when they had to go away. I never saw the elder brother again, but the younger one spent two more leaves with me.

CHAPTER XII.

An officer one day arrived at my house from one of the discharge depôts.

"Have I the honour of speaking to Mrs. Bagshaw," he asked.

"I do not know that is a great honour," I remarked, "but you are certainly speaking to her."

He said he had come specially to make my acquaintance, as he had heard much about me in the camp the night previously. He had been speaking to the boys who were to go back to Canada, and getting their impressions of England and the friends they had made. Many of the boys had spent different leaves with me, and had mentioned it

to him. I invited him to enter, and he put several questions to me as to how I managed the boys, etc. He was most interested, and I asked him if he would stay to tea, which he did. Eventually, I took him upstairs to show him where the boys slept, the bed of my own ever dear boy.

Before leaving, my husband returned home and the officer asked us if we would have him for a week-end, and we gladly said "yes." He came, and a firm friendship sprang up between my husband and him. He came many times after that and kept up a correspondence after reaching Canada. He died about ten years ago, his wife having predeceased him about a year.

I think I will mention here about the only Australian boy who slept at my house.

If it should be that he will read these

pages, I hope he will feel a touch of remorse, knowing that during his brief stay at my home he robbed me, a woman who had mothered him, given him food and shelter, and also money when he was in need. It was an overwhelming shock to me to find out that this boy had actually robbed me. I did not miss the things he took for nearly a week, as I had no suspicion whatever that he was not straight. I found out from the police afterwards that he had just served six months in prison for stealing plate from a hotel in London. They tried to persuade me to take out a warrant for his arrest, but I would not do so because he had fought in the war.

I hate to recall his visit to me, for his is the only shameful act from all the boys I sheltered. Since that day I have never met him, but I received a letter from his mother in Australia asking me if I could give her his address, as he had

not written her for so long. I replied to her, telling her I did not know it, but I did not tell her what he had done. In her letter she told me that he was a married man, and I did not know it for he had never told me.

CHAPTER XIII.

I met many New Zealanders during my visits to hospital, but never had one to stay with me in my house. I have nothing but good to say for them. One particularly nice man named Sutton, who was wounded in the Dardenelles, was in hospital a long time, and came to my house often as my husband and he became great friends. This has been a lasting friendship, as he still corresponds with me, although it is fifteen years since I saw him. He married one of his nurses and she returned to New Zealand with him. He has shown his gratitude to me in more ways than one, and does not forget the friendship

formed when he lay wounded, for many are the beautiful letters I have received from him and his wife, with nice gifts enclosed.

CHAPTER XIV.

The Canadians generally came to me in pairs, as I always told the boys they could bring a chum with them, if the chum had nowhere to go. Therefore, when a boy named Leo came on leave one Saturday, I was not surprised to find that he had brought a chum with him. I found that a good number of the Canadians were Roman Catholics; I am not a Roman Catholic, but I was always most particular that they should attend their Mass on a Sunday morning. So the morning after Leo came, I called him up about eight o'clock to go to Mass, and he said, "Mother, come here

a minute!"

I opened the door and Leo continued, "Mother, I have been at Mass every Sunday since I've been in camp, and you can bet your bottom dollar I'm not going to-day!"

"Well you know, Leo, that your mother would expect you to go to Mass, so get up, there's a good lad, and you can come back to bed again if you wish."

"I'll tell you what it is, mother," he continued, "I think I'll have to join another religion, one as doesn't start until the afternoons!"

All the same Leo got up, went to Mass, and returned to bed again. This boy spent eight leaves with me altogether and went out to France four times. He looked a perfect wreck when he returned to Canada, but I have lost touch with him for some time now.

He was a boy very fond of the girls,

and one Sunday he asked me if he could bring a girl whom I knew to tea. I said certainly, so he and his chum went out and returned with two young ladies I did not know, so Leo took me on one side and explained that the other girl did not turn up, and, as he had known these two, he asked them both to come, one for the chum. I had a house full at the time having some boys to tea from the hospital. We were all quite happy having music together when a knock came to the door, and behold! the young lady No. 1 stood there whom Leo had gone to meet. I was in ever such a dilemma as I did not want to hurt her feelings or get Leo into trouble, so I had to use a little bluff.

“Haven’t you seen Leo?” I asked.

“No,” she said, “I was very late so I expect he got tired of waiting,” she replied.

“I was expecting you to tea,” I went

on, "so you had better go back and see if you can find him."

"I hardly know where to look now," she replied, "unless I go to the place where we arranged to meet at first."

"Exactly," I agreed, "the very place, and when you find him come right up here and have tea."

Off she went, and I quietly called Leo out of the sitting-room, and told him what had taken place, also to advise him to take the other two girls home.

I looked out through the front door and could see the other young lady at the corner of the street looking for a car, so I smuggled Leo, his chum and the two other girls out through the rear entrance where he could take a car at a stop further up the road, and so avoid an awkward meeting. She little thought that Leo was in the house at the time she was at our door, and doubtless she

wondered why I did not ask her in. That was Leo's last visit to me, so I never met the girl again for any awkward explanations.

CHAPTER XV.

A mother from New Brunswick once wrote to me, telling me that her young son had come over to England and my name had been passed on to her as one who would "mother" him, and she asked me if I would look after him, as he had had a good bringing up, and she was so afraid he may be tempted to go the wrong way.

I replied to her letter telling her that England was only a small place but a big place to run about after boys, but if her boy would make mine his home, I would be only too glad to "mother" him. She sent me his address and I wrote him, and received a reply telling

me he would come when he got leave.

The next thing was I heard he had been admitted into a hospital in Cheshire, where he was badly wounded. I applied for a pass to visit him, and as I had a Canadian staying with me at the time, I asked him if he would like to come with me to see him. He came with me, and, wonderful to relate, found it was a chum of his. The first-named boy, whose mother had written to me, I will call Sam. Well, I asked Sam to come to me when he had his convalescent leave and he promised he would do so.

A few weeks afterwards he wrote me saying I could expect him on Christmas Eve. I had six more boys in the house that Christmas and we were all looking forward for this boy to come, but he never turned up much to my disappointment. Christmas passed over and four of the boys went away in four days'

time and on New Year's Eve, this boy Sam, who should have come on Christmas Eve, turned up. I regret to say he was a very sad boy, for he had started to come to me on Christmas Eve, but unfortunately made the acquaintance of a woman, who was a soldier's wife. She had actually taken him home with her and kept him, and before he came away she had £15 off him. He was a very wretched boy as he made this confession.

I said to him, "What do you think your mother would say or think if she knew this?"

"If I thought my mother would ever know it," he replied, "I would shoot myself!"

I felt very much distressed at certain things this poor lad told me, for he was only twenty and did not know much about the ways of the world. I had him for the rest of his leave and

lent him money to carry on which he repaid me in full quite honourably.

This was not the only tragic affair in my experience during the war, and as I said before, it was for the young boy I was ever on the look-out.

I remember one day going down to the hospital, and, as I got off the car, I noticed a young Canadian lad talking to a woman in Piccadilly (this boy was only eighteen, just over from Canada on his landing leave). I had become well versed in their uniforms, and could tell at a glance if they were new or how many times they had been in France.

I watched this boy and woman for some time and eventually they began to walk away. I may mention here that I had seen this same woman with many soldiers before, so I ran after them and I said to the boy, "Laddie, I want to speak to you. I see that you belong to the 19th Battalion. Do you happen to

know a boy named George Brown?"

"No, madam," he replied, "I do not know him by name, but I may know him by sight."

"Well I have his picture here, and I will show it to you," I said.

At this, the woman he was with began to walk away a little, so I spoke quietly to him and said, "I did not call you back for this, laddie, but that woman you are with is no good to you!"

"Do you know her?" he asked.

"No, I do not know her, but I know her class," I replied.

"She seems quite nice," he said.

"Yes, doubtless she does," I replied.

"Have you a mother in Canada?"

"Yes, I have," he replied.

"Perhaps a sister, too," I said.

"Yes," he said.

"Well, for your mother's sake and your sister's sake, come with me," I said; "I am going into the hospital

to see some Canadians, so come with me. Tell this woman you are going into hospital to see some friends."

He hesitated a second or two, then he said, "Yes, I will come with you."

He went up to the woman and said something to her, and then came along with me. I went on to say, "You have a sum of money on you, haven't you? About ten pounds?"

"Yes," he said.

"Well, if you had gone with her you would not have it this time to-morrow," I said.

I went on to warn him of the dangers which lurked in our streets. I took him into hospital, and, strange to say, he found a chum of his from his own home village in Canada. These two boys, later on, spent their leave with me and had a very happy time. They are both married now and settled down with little families in Canada; one in Ontario and one in Regina.

CHAPTER XVI.

It was in 1916 when I met with an Irish boy named Michael; he came from Limerick and was only eighteen years of age. He had no parents which appealed to me very much. I, of course, met him in hospital, where he lay ill with a severe attack of trench fever. I encouraged him to make use of my home and I became quite attached to the boy, whom I found had a fine character. He told me he had been brought up by an uncle, who was very kind to him and was still living. After he became convalescent, he spent his leave with me, and when quite recovered was sent out to France again. I corres-

ponded with him regularly for which he was truly grateful. He was wounded two or three times, and sent out to France again each time until March 21st, 1918, he became prisoner of war and was kept prisoner until the war was over. He had a brother Patrick also whom I never saw, but corresponded a little with him, when we had word to say he was killed. This was naturally a great grief to Michael.

I wrote Michael regularly in prison; he never received one of my letters or parcels, but when the war was over the letters were returned to me by the authorities. After he returned from Germany, he wrote me from Ireland, before he was demobilised, thus :

“ My dear and ever-loving mother.
I am writing before I am ‘ demobbed ’
to ask you if I could come and live
with you at your home when I am
free again. I would love to take the

place of the dear son you have lost and work for you. You have, ever since it was my luck to come in Roby Street Hospital, been a true, loving mother to me and I feel I would like to work for you and repay you in some way for all you have done for me. I hope you will not think I presume too much in wishing to come into your home, but I feel you will understand me. Your kindness to me I will never, never forget, and I will ever say prayers for you, and may God ever bless you.—Your loving and devoted son, Michael.”

I was very much touched at this letter, but wrote back immediately telling him I thought it was his duty first to his old uncle who had brought him up. I said we did not know what the future may hold forth. He quite understood all I said, and remained with his uncle. He is now married with a little

family—I think, poor boy, he has suffered a good deal from unemployment.

I just mention this little incident to show that every boy in khaki was welcome.

I well remember one of my Canadian boys went to Edinburgh for half his leave. Whilst there, he wrote asking me if he could bring another chum with him whom he had met there. I wrote saying yes, of course. He brought him and a particularly nice boy he was; he came from California and I still hear from him. My husband and I accompanied them one night to the theatre and as we were returning home, my husband was walking on ahead with the one boy we knew, and the new one was walking with me. This boy, whom I will call Fred (the other Glenn) said to me, "Do you know what Glenn said before we came, mother?"

"No," I answered, "what did he say?"

"Oh," says Fred, "Glenn said mother gives you an awfully good time, but she's awful particular."

I laughed at this, but said "I am glad he realises I am particular Fred, for I am particular in regard to you boys. I do not like you to get into trouble."

"It would be a shame if we did, mother," he said, "the way you look after us."

They spent a very enjoyable time together and spent several leaves with me after this.

Another time I had three boys with me—Dick, Jimmy, and Will.

They went down the town together—this was Jimmy's first visit to me—the others I had had before. I instructed them to be home for dinner at one o'clock. One o'clock came and they did not turn up. I worried over them, as we had received an invitation out to tea to some friends of mine the other side

of Manchester, and I was afraid we would not be in time. Two o'clock came and still no boys, and just upon half-past two I went to look out and saw them coming up the street, Jimmy looking as though he had had drink; I was furious at this but kept my head.

When they came in, Jimmy put a parcel into my hands, and said "Mother, these are for you." I replied, "Jimmy, I do not require peace offerings, but I do require an explanation for coming home in this state, and all the good dinner spoiled by waiting."

Jimmy looked very crestfallen and said, "I am very sorry, mother."

I turned then to the other two boys and said, "Now, Dick and Will, you know very well I do not allow this, and why have you allowed Jimmy to get in this state?"

Will said, "Well, he didn't seem to

have much, mother. Anyway, we couldn't help it."

"Well I am very cross indeed, and you know that we are invited out to-day."

"Oh," says Dick, "there is plenty of time."

"Plenty of time?" I ejaculated, "if you think I am going across Manchester with three drunken men, you are very much mistaken, for I will not go out."

I turned to Jimmy and said, "Jimmy, you must have an emetic, and go to bed!"

I gave him an emetic of warm water and salt which made him sick, then I ordered him to bed.

Dick and Will were very penitent, but they did not seem to be as bad as Jimmy.

About four-thirty, I took Jimmy up a cup of strong tea; he was wide awake.

"Well," I asked, "how are you now?"

"Oh, I am jake, mother, never felt

better in my life." (He told me afterwards that I couldn't guess what a splitting headache he had got, but he wasn't going to admit it).

"Well then," I said, "You had better get up, give yourself a good wash and smarten yourself up, then perhaps I will come out with you."

Well, the end of the matter was I went out to tea to my friends' house, and we got there about six o'clock. She had wondered why we were so late, and had a good laugh when I told her on the quiet about their escapade.

Anyway, Jimmy spent many leaves with me after that, but I never saw the slightest sign of drink on him any more; he returned to Canada alright.

I had forgotten to mention that the parcel Jimmy put into my hands contained some beautiful fancy combs for my hair, which were then fashionable.

During 1917 and 1918, many Ameri-

can soldiers died from a very malignant form of influenza, and many funerals took place in one week in Manchester. Their resting place was arranged in the "Heroes' Corner" in the Southern Cemetery.

Some little time afterwards, a memorial service was held at the cemetery near the graves; it was organised by the American Consul. The Lord and Lady Mayoress were present, together with many of the aldermen and councillors, as well as many influential men of Manchester. I attended the service myself, accompanied by two of my Canadian boys. It was most impressive.

During the service, the thought struck me that it was strange no service had been held over our British or Canadian graves. (I may mention here that a service had also been held over the Australian and New Zealand graves on the anniversary of Gallipoli). Therefore,

when I began to think that our own boys and Canadian boys had had no memorial, the thought haunted me and I sought the help of the then Lord Mayor, through one of the aldermen of the city, who had already been most kind to me in regard to the boys. He wrote a note of introduction to the Lord Mayor, telling him of my wish and asking him to give me his sympathetic consideration.

I was admitted into the presence of the Lord Mayor, to whom I explained my wish, giving him my reasons for doing so. I explained that the Americans had received homage, as also the Australians, and I felt that our own boys and Canadians should receive homage too. I told him that I had been with a Canadian boy a short time ago, who was buried with a hole in his side larger than a basin, yet, my Lord Mayor, we have dumped his body in the cemetery

and no more to it. "You were present yourself at the American service, cannot you allow me to organise a service for our own men and Canadians, I feel we should pay homage to their memory publicly."

The Lord Mayor quietly said "This is very upsetting to me, for I have lost a son."

"So have I, my Lord Mayor!" I replied, "one of the best who ever lived."

"Have you, indeed?" he ejaculated, "have the service when you like and I will be present."

I thanked him very sincerely and asked him if he would extend an invitation to the aldermen and councillors to attend, and he said he would do so.

The service was arranged to take place about six weeks ahead of that time. I would like to say here how much I appreciated the kindness of the

Lord Mayor at that time, and the kind help he gave me.

It was a wonderful service, and it was a beautiful day. The attendance numbered many thousands of people. A firing party from Buxton were in attendance for the Canadian graves, and a firing party from one of our own regimental depôts for the British. Nurses from the British Red Cross were in procession, also the soldiers in blue from the hospitals. The band of the Comrades of the Great War supplied the music, and the Manchester Philharmonic led the singing.

I made one hundred and fifty laurel wreaths for the graves. I would like to bear testimony to the great help I received from Mr. Hurst, of the Southern Cemetery, and his staff. They gave me every help possible, and were the means of making the service a great success. As a matter of fact, everybody

was interested and in their own way gave me all the help they possibly could. Without the help I received from others it would have been impossible for me to have carried it to such a successful termination.

A temporary cenotaph was made in the centre of the service ground, covered with mauve cloth, and a march past was arranged for the troops and nurses, as a mark of homage to the dead and to all Manchester boys who were buried away from home.

After the service, the Lord Mayor turned to me and shook hands, at the same time congratulating me on the success of the service. I just replied, for I was almost in tears, "My Lord Mayor, if I die to-night, I am satisfied."

Several ladies have been very much interested in the work I had been doing, and one lady in particular has been most kind, sending me maple leaves from

Canada to make wreaths for the graves. I may here say that before the Manchester Cenotaph was unveiled, a public service was held each year in the Southern Cemetery, represented by each denomination. I always attended this service, and I now attend the service in the Square each Armistice Day, representing the Mothers of Canada (at their request) whose boys died in Manchester. I almost feel this is the greatest honour which could be bestowed upon me, and I have promised (D.V.) to do it as long as I live.

Before I finish these episodes, I would like to give a letter which I received from the Canadian padre who was stationed at Buxton. This letter gave me such happiness and comfort that I cannot refrain from its reproduction. He wrote me, telling me that he thought "my noble influence for good with these boys will stick to them through life, and

it is a beautiful memorial to your dear son."

I was much touched by receiving this letter and answered it almost immediately. He did not write again for some time, but one morning, about two months afterwards, I received the following letter.

Buxton, Sept. 22nd, 1918.

"Dear Mrs. Bagshaw.—If I neglected to reply to your splendid letter I assure you it was by accident; I may have acknowledged it, but I fear that I have not. I would love to meet one like yourself, whose heart is surcharged with love for our fighting men. Your beautiful reference to your own dear son touches me deeply, 'He died the noblest death of all, for God, for Right, for Liberty, and such a death is immortality.' You say in your letter 'I am only an ordinary working man's wife.' That may be,

but you are not an ordinary woman, for you show the very noblest womanhood and motherhood. Happy are the dear lads who know you, to whom you write and whom you welcome to your home.

May God ever bless you in all you do, and continue to sustain you in the loss of your dear boy. I, too, have one son; he is serving in the ranks and has been for thirty-six months at the front with machine-guns. All these wounded lads are my 'sons'; I love them, and to serve them as 'padre' is my happiest privilege.—

I am, yours faithfully, E. Bertram Hooper, C.F., Major."

I received several letters in the same strain, and if these words should ever be read by the "padre," I wish him to know that his beautiful letters and comforting words have been read by me many, many times, and have been a

source a great happiness to me, especially to know that my little efforts were so much appreciated.

It will be understood by now my real reason for the interest I took in these Canadians was because they were so far from home. I used to visualise my own boys in Canada under the same circumstances. Every British boy had a home to go to when on leave, but the Colonial boys had not a great many homes open to them. Every boy who wore khaki was welcome in my house but, of course, the Canadians made it their real home. They left their treasures and their souvenirs with me during their stay in camp or in France, which were safely restored to them when they spent their last leave with me.

Armistice Day, 1918, as everyone knows, was a memorable day throughout the Empire. I had three boys staying with me at the time and believe me,

I then began to realise what it all meant to me.

I realised that my ever dear boy would not return to me; the other, thank God, had returned some months ago. I also realised that my Canadian boys were all going back, and that I probably would never see them again.

So, instead of feeling happy and joyful because the war was over, I felt inexpressibly sad, and I wept nearly the whole of the day, feeling very much ashamed of myself, because others were happy.

The reaction of the four previous years, of the loss of my ever dear boy, of the lovely friendships I had made with the different boys who had worn khaki belonging to the Empire, was too overwhelming for words, and it is impossible for me to explain fully my real feelings.

I am fully aware of my shortcomings

in trying to make myself understood, and I am humbly aware of my failings. Yet I trust that those who read these pages will not fall asleep over my first ineffectual effort to pen my experiences, but with kind and tolerant patience bear with me and read on to the end.

Whatever I was privileged to do in the Great War, I did for the love of the fighting men, who were doing and had done so much for us.

I did nothing wonderful; anybody could have done what I did had the same opportunities arisen for them. The boys themselves deserved greatest credit for the success of my work, they were such a wonderful help.

I can only say that this work began in a very small way, but it grew into a big work. The war dragged on and consequently the number of boys I 'mothered' increased. As I said, it grew into a big work, and I say it with all humility.

Every boy called me "mother" which made me a very happy woman, and helped to alleviate my bitter sorrow.

I must here, also, pay tribute to my dear husband, who helped me greatly in this work with his whole heart and soul—financially, as well as personal help and advice. We both loved the work.

Many other friends were very sympathetic and kind, and helped me in many ways, and they ever have my grateful thanks. I have boys in almost every part of the Empire.

Altogether, I made ninety-seven applications for extra leave to the officers of the boys and never had but one refusal, and that was because the boy was sailing the following Wednesday. One hundred and twenty-five Canadian boys used my boy's bed; some of them used it for several different leaves. Also one Irish, one Scotch, one Welsh, as well as one or two English.

My firm conviction is that my ever dear boy has been behind all this work, and I am grateful that I was able to carry on the work which he was called upon to give up.

There is nothing wonderful about me. I was only an ordinary woman, the wife of a working man, but I have always loved my country and I love it a thousand times more because my boy died for it.

Surely, surely, something great lies ahead for this dear country in which we live, that all these dear boys should die for it. Not in my time, perhaps, but in the time to come when I am no more. I pray for that great day to come.

I close with feelings of great peace and memories of the past, and I shall never cease to thank God for putting this great work into my very humble hands to do.

CANADA LAD.

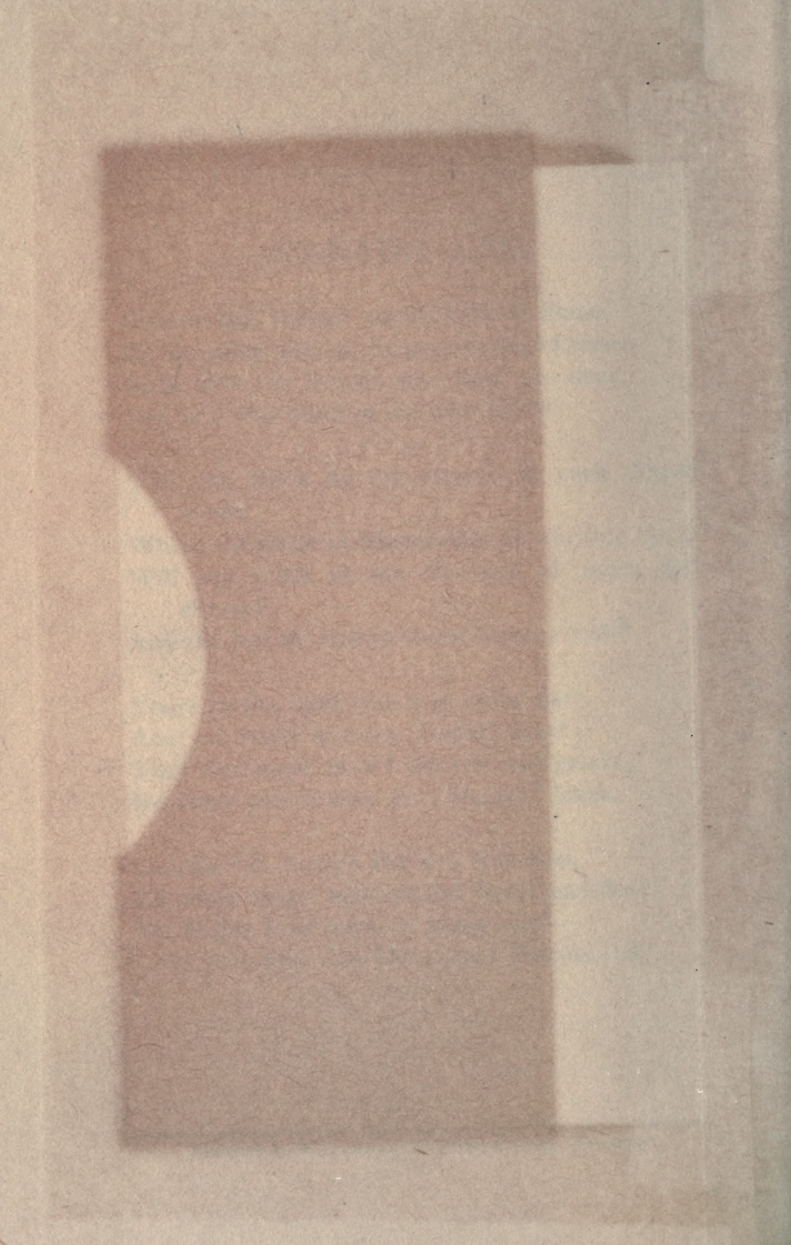
Canada lad, though you're back at home,
On the other side of the grey-backed foam—
Back with the friends who hold you dear,
Say, will you think of me over here?

Will you think of the crowds in each dim-lit
street,
Where the pulse of Manchester in wartime beat?
Will you think of the shortage of sugar and
cheese?
And the fun we had at those Sunday teas?

Yours in the fight was a glorious part,
And you fairly won my English heart:
Yes! e'en more than I did fret and grieve,
No more you'd come on "blighty" leave.

Canada lad, though the war was won,
I'll never forget what you've borne and done.
My Maple Leaf boys, in khaki clad—
Good luck and God bless you! Canada lad.





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Author Bagshaw, M.E.]

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